

When the store went out of business, Venessa had no choice but to go back to work at Walmart in 2005. Vanessa and other associates had concerns about scheduling and management's attitude toward the workers. Eventually, the store began to hire temporary workers instead of giving full time work to the current employees.

In 2009, Vanessa discovered the Organization United for Respect at Walmart or OUR Walmart. She became an "Our Walmart" member online but kept her membership private. In 2012, Vanessa went on strike at her store during the week of Black Friday. Vanessa returned back to work after going on strike with a new sense of dignity.

Vanessa became one of the main leaders for Our Walmart in Central Florida. In April 2013, Vanessa was fired from her position with Walmart in retaliation for her activism. She continues to advocate for workers' rights by sharing her own experiences.

I am happy to honor Vanessa Hall Ferreira, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her courage and commitment to workers' rights.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF MARCOS VILAR

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the career of Marcos Vilar. Mr. Vilar was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He moved to the United States at the age of 14 and has since lived in New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Washington, DC, Chicago, Tampa, and Orlando. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of Maryland and a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Mr. Vilar worked as a teacher in Chicago, where he also was active in community work. During his tenure at Roberto Community Academy he was best known for working with at risk youth and developing arts and cultural programming into after school activities. He was also advisor for the Student Government body and a leader of the local reform movement at the school.

Mr. Vilar moved to Washington, DC in January of 2002, and there held several national leadership positions including National Field Director for the Que Nada Nos Detenga, voter registration campaign of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, Executive Director for America's Families United, National Political Director for SEIU, and National Field Director for Mi Familia Vota Education Fund.

Mr. Vilar's work as Executive Director for America's Families United was fundamental to the development of Catalyst, which has become the standard voter file database used by progressive organizations. He was also a founding member of the Catalyst Board of Managers.

As Political Director of SEIU, Mr. Vilar focused on improving member databases and was responsible for aggressively growing the COPE Fund, SEIU's Political Action Committee (PAC). During his two year tenure, the PAC doubled its annual income and became the largest PAC in the country.

As National Field Director for Mi Familia Vota Education Fund, Mr. Vilar led efforts to engage Latinos in the 2012 election cycle. He was instrumental in the development and success of the National Latino Civic Engagement Table, a coalition of national organizations working together to increase Latino civic participation in key states. In addition he oversaw the opening of Mi Familia Vota Education Fund operations in Texas and Florida in 2011 and 2012.

Vilar moved to Florida in 2012 and served as statewide coordinator for the Alliance for Citizenship, a national immigration reform campaign. He is now working as Statewide Field Director for Florida New Majority.

I am happy to honor Marcos Vilar, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his many accomplishments and contributions to his community.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF LUIS R. PASTRANA SILVA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Luis R. Pastrana Silva for his service to our country and to the Hispanic community in Central Florida.

Mr. Pastrana was born in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. He holds a B.B.A. from the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), Rio Piedras Campus, an M.B.A. from Farleigh Dickinson University, and a J.D. from the UPR School of Law. Mr. Pastrana honorably served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army for 20 years. After his retirement from the Army in 1978, Mr. Pastrana held several positions within the government of Puerto Rico, promoting business and economic development.

In 2001, he moved to Orlando to serve as the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration's Regional Director for Southern States. Since 2003, he has served as Distinguished Professor at the Ana G. Mendez University System in Orlando, FL. He is also a member of the Puerto Rico Bar, the American Bar Association, and the Hispanic National Bar Association.

Mr. Pastrana has been a leader in the Puerto Rican community in Central Florida and a champion for business development. He has published two autobiographies and one research book on the U.S. Constitution. He is happily married to Mareitssa Griggs, a college professor, and together they have five children and five grandchildren.

I am happy to honor Luis R. Pastrana Silva, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his service to our country and to the Hispanic community.

#### HONORING THE LEGACY OF LOVE OF JUANITA GARCÍA PERAZA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month to recognize the life and legacy of Juanita García Peraza, founder of the Congregación Mita Church.

Juanita García Peraza was born on June 24, 1897, in Hatillo, Puerto Rico. She came from a distinguished family, and was known for her moral and spiritual values, her love for the poor, and her sensitivity toward the pain of others. In the late 1930's, when Puerto Rico and the U.S. were experiencing a great economic crisis, Juanita became ill and was bed-ridden with gastroenteritis. While confined with the illness, Juanita promised the Lord that if He healed her, she would serve Him for the rest of her days. She was healed. She then abandoned her social position and fortune, and traveled the countryside visiting the poor and the needy to preach the good news.

In 1940, in the town of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, Juanita founded the Congregación Mita Church with a message of love, freedom, and unity. In 1947, the Church was established in the capital city of San Juan, in the Hato Rey sector. She performed missionary work, visiting prisons and hospitals and helping reform many alcoholics and drug addicts. In addition to her spiritual work, Juanita carried out extraordinary social work in the community. She

developed credit unions and corporations that provide employment and economic opportunities to members of the church. She established Bible schools, known as the "Consejero," to instruct, counsel, and guide children in their integral development. She founded music academies to benefit children and adolescents by encouraging their development in the arts. Also, she established the Ministry of Guards to watch over the church's properties and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Likewise, Juanita established the Ministry of Preachers and Deacons who perform social work wherever the congregation is established. She envisioned the creation of a shelter for the elderly and a school for the children and youth of the community, both of which became a reality a few years after she passed away. Under her leadership, her work spread to New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC, as well as Santo Domingo and Santiago de los Caballeros in the Dominican Republic.

Juanita initiated a new era for women. At a time when women were not allowed to officiate in church and faced discrimination, she removed barriers and cleared the way for women to express themselves openly. Juanita allowed women equal participation in the church, including leadership roles. Despite being assailed, slandered, and misinterpreted, she pushed ahead bravely, leaving behind a legacy of love in the hearts of those who knew her.

In 1978, the Universidad Hispano Americana recognized Juanita for her extraordinary work, and awarded her the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management Honoris Causae. A public elementary school in one of the communities where she served was also named in her honor.

I am happy to honor Juanita García Peraza, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for all her hard work, courage, and dedication.

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

##### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$16,747,411,584,091.53. We've added \$6,120,534,535,178.45 to our debt in 4 years. This is \$6.1 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

#### HONORING CECILIA CASSIDY

##### HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the outstanding contributions of Cecilia Cassidy and to commemorate her retirement after 21 years of service to the community of Rosslyn.

As executive director of Rosslyn Renaissance, Ms. Cassidy was crucial in growing the